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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 15 July 1992, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. AMAZIANE
(Vice-President)

(Morocco)

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Operational activities for development (continued)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Amaziane (Morocco),
Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1992/28, E/1992/29, E/1992/64; A/47/235-E/1992/69 and Add.1 and 2, A/47/264-E/1992/71; E/1992/73, E/1992/98; E/1992/L.23)

Mr. KONG (Director, Technical Coordination Policy Division, Department of Economic and Social Development) said that the restructuring of the Secretariat and, in particular, the consolidation of six entities into one, the Department of Economic and Social Development, was designed to maximize the Organization's impact in the economic and social sectors. The integration of analytical research and operational activities in the Department also made it possible to translate global policies into concrete work programmes in developing countries.

The Department's operational activities had placed increased emphasis on national capacity-building, multidisciplinary programme approach, decentralization and inter-agency cooperation at the field level, and national execution. Many of the operations had proved instrumental in promoting growth in various economic sectors of developing countries, such as natural resources and energy, economic management, development administration and integrated rural development. The Department had given greater support to government machinery for national execution and had also developed new initiatives relating to electoral administration, aid accountability and economies in transition. Specific efforts had also been deployed in the fields of environmental management and sustainable development in order to take an interdisciplinary approach to those issues.

As in previous years, the Department's expenditure in the Africa region were higher than in the other regions, amounting to about 47 per cent of total delivery. Integration of development planning and economic management

(Mr. Kong)

represented an important part of the Department's activities. Assistance to the least developed countries had been expanded, and about 400 projects totaling approximately \$80 million had been developed in 1991. The Department would continue to base its collaboration with UNDP on the tripartite relationship. In view of the increasing importance of financing to most countries, developing countries must continue to have access to objective advice and technical services to support their projects on a politically neutral and commercially disinterested basis. The United Nations could play a more active role in providing technical cooperation services, if its resource base was strengthened through increased support from the regular budget and other sources such as multilateral financial institutions and bilateral channels. The eradication of poverty was essential in order to ensure lasting peace and security.

Mr. KAARIA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the basic aim of the Nordic proposals for reforming United Nations operational activities was to strengthen the Organization's role in development. It was essential to bring about a clearer division of labour between the United Nations system and the multilateral development banks, exploiting the relative strengths and comparative advantages of the various agencies. In view of the shift towards the World Bank and other international financial institutions in the field of multilateral technical assistance, United Nations technical assistance must be made more efficient and effective. There should also be clearer complementarity and closer cooperation among those organizations. The specialized agencies should become more qualified and relevant within their mandates. Developing countries needed the agencies' professional expertise and should be able to choose from among several multilateral partners.

It was regrettable that the Secretariat had been unable to complete the triennial comprehensive policy review in time for the current session. He hoped that the review paper would be issued well in advance of consideration of that question by the General Assembly and looked forward to an analysis of any impediments encountered in developing national programme frameworks and national strategies; moving towards a programme approach and national

(Mr. Kaaria, Finland)

execution; and establishing a more integrated United Nations presence in the field and strengthening the resident coordinator system. The report should contain clear recommendations on ways to overcome such impediments and implement resolutions 44/211 and 46/219.

The Nordic countries stressed the need to have a common understanding of such concepts as national execution and the programme approach so that they could be applied uniformly throughout the system. There was a need for system-wide governance, improved operational guidance and inter-agency coordination. The responsibility for implementing the new concepts set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/211 lay largely with the recipient Governments. Those Governments were also in a position to give strong impetus to the United Nations system in its programme approach. The governing bodies of agencies should give recipient countries support to that end.

National development plans and programme frameworks were a prerequisite for active United Nations development operations in any country. In view of the need for flexibility, it was necessary to strengthen the resident coordinator system and ensure an integrated approach and a more unified United Nations presence in the field. Noting that the Department of Economic and Social Development had both an operational arm and a responsibility for strategic work and coordination, he said that the Nordic countries were not fully convinced that assigning such a dual function to one department was an ideal solution.

Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that, while recognizing that neither governance nor executive management could work effectively alone, he wished to focus on the management of operational activities which, in the case of the United Nations development system, was too complex and fragmented. Although significant improvements had been made, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was not yet in a position to provide the overall management required. Moreover, although considerable time had elapsed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/211 - which set out complex directives concerning harmonization of programme cycles, common premises, national programme frameworks and strengthening of the resident coordinators that were remarkably similar to those set forth in General Assembly resolution 32/197 -

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(Mr. Soutter, Canada)

the United Nations system remained unequipped to provide the overall management required to ensure their implementation and progress had therefore been painfully slow.

According to the information provided to the Council, harmonization of programming cycles had taken place in 27 countries but had not been possible in 18. That left some 70 countries where, it would seem, no progress had been made. Similarly, substantive action on common premises had been made or was planned in 19 countries, which represented only about 16 per cent of the total. The plan for the achievement of common premises requested in General Assembly resolution 46/219 apparently had not been produced, clearly indicating the lack of overall management of the process. With regard to national programme frameworks, only a few anecdotal examples were provided of countries where some steps had been taken. As to the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator, more resources were sought when what was needed was greater authority.

It was not his intention to allocate blame for the problem, which was structural in nature. Coordination of the essentially autonomous elements of the United Nations development system would not alone ensure that directives issued would be implemented. What was needed was overall system direction and management from the United Nations Secretariat. The Office of Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation had been established to fill that gap but, due in part to the fact that the position had not been given any real authority, it had not done so. It was essential that the new Department of Economic and Social Development not be just a monitoring and reporting agent for the system, and certainly not just another implementing arm thereof. Rather it should be a true system manager deriving its authority from the Council and the Secretary-General. If it was to accomplish that goal with integrity and impact, the Department must be divested of its role in operational activities, for system management and policy development were incompatible with the role of project executing agent, given the potential for conflict of interest.

Clear system management responsibilities and authority also were critically important in the field. To that end, his delegation endorsed the

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(Mr. Soutter, Canada)

proposals by the Administrator of UNDP for a single United Nations country office under the authority of a single resident coordinator appointed by, and reporting to, the Secretary-General. The coordinator and the Government concerned would be responsible for designing a single, coherent and integrated country programme based on capacity-building. Necessary corollaries to that approach were maximum possible decentralization, tightly coordinated overall management, personnel mobility and maximum use of national professionals.

His delegation believed that greater attention must be paid to evaluating the real impact of programmes, as compared with assessing compliance with rules and regulations. As to the question of sustainability, a project which, on completion, required continued government support, might well be questionable. Projects must be sustainable not only financially, but also environmentally, politically, socially and culturally. Furthermore, while cumbersome national bureaucracies could prove a problem, the role of the United Nations was not to replace or circumvent them, but rather to help national authorities develop more efficient and streamlined bureaucracies through policy advice and capacity-building.

Ms. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) endorsed the assessment in the Nordic memorandum on reform of United Nations governance and finance (E/1992/91) that the fragmentation of the governance of development activities of the United Nations should be remedied by assigning to a single body the task of high-level discussion on development issues and the provision of policy guidance and cohesion to the relevant executive organs. The Economic and Social Council should be entrusted with the function which the Nordic memorandum allocated to an international development council. The functions were entirely compatible with the role established for the Economic and Social Council in the relevant provisions of the Charter and were consistent with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/264.

If the Council was to assume the functions of an international development council, its role should be confined to providing high-level political advice, coordination and supervision of operational activities. The Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, in which all United Nations Members were represented on an equal footing, was the appropriate

(Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

forum for debate on the economic and social issues which currently were discussed in the sessional committees of the Council. Accordingly, the Economic and Social Committees of the Council should be eliminated. Responsibility for technical decisions with regard to programme budget implications under rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council could be reallocated.

With respect to the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the operational agencies, her delegation concurred with the suggestion in the Nordic memorandum that smaller executive bodies operating on the basis of constituencies were desirable. How best to effect the reform of existing governing bodies should be discussed more thoroughly, including at the individual agency level.

The relationship between the proposed international development council and the proposed commission on sustainable development should be carefully examined. The proposal by the Netherlands representative during the high-level segment that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council should be preceded by a short, high-level meeting of the Commission should be fully explored. The relationship between the two prospective bodies must be borne in mind when the mandate and terms of reference of the Commission were established.

The establishment of unified United Nations field offices should be energetically pursued. She concurred with the Nordic project's conclusion that issues of governance and finance were linked, and agreed that international development cooperation as an expression of international solidarity should be a shared endeavour. Her delegation therefore supported the medium-term goal of establishing a tripartite funding system combining assessed contributions, negotiated pledges and voluntary contributions. The concerns raised by the representative of Japan at the preceding meeting would have to be discussed in detail as the reform process proceeded.

Her delegation was pleased that the Secretary-General had undertaken a very thorough study in connection with the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations

(Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl, Austria)

system. Coordination of operational activities within the system must be enhanced, and the resident representatives should be empowered to coordinate system activities in the field.

Mr. NIE Hualiang (China) supported the suggestions made pursuant to General Assembly decision 46/465 to improve the management of operational activities, efficiency and delivery of economic and technical assistance to the developing countries. The United Nations development system had substantially enhanced the developing countries' capacity for self-reliance and had improved their standard of living, and it should continue to honour its time-tested principles of providing assistance on a multilateral, universal, neutral and grant basis.

His delegation cautioned against any derogation from the principle of respect for national sovereignty during the reform process. The democratic decision-making process must be assured by adhering to the principle of the equal right of all States to participate in United Nations affairs, irrespective of their size, power or wealth. His delegation also opposed any attempt to use reform as a pretext to attach political conditions to assistance provided through the United Nations development system. Reform was a gradual process and should be achieved by seeking consensus, after taking into consideration the views of all sides. His delegation was prepared to take an active part in the relevant consultations on the basis of those principles. Moreover, reform should lead to increased financing for operational activities on a more stable and predictable basis and should not add to the burden of the developing countries.

With respect to coordination, coordination at the field level was primarily the responsibility of the Government of the country concerned. Resident coordinators should be drawn from the entire United Nations system, should demonstrate leadership qualities and should be responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance as well as operational activities for development. Coordination should strive to ensure maximum responsiveness to the needs of Governments. Coordination at the headquarters level should ensure a clear division of responsibilities within the United Nations development system as well as the complementarity of efforts.

(Mr. Nie Hualiang, China)

At its 1992 sessions, the UNDP Governing Council had wasted precious time and had diverted attention from the pressing problems of the developing countries by debating the subject of political freedoms as discussed in the World Development Report 1992. The topic was outside its mandate and UNDP should cease working on the subject.

His delegation recognized that enhanced national management and capacity-building for self-reliance were central to the process of national execution. United Nations organizations and their field offices had the obligation to enhance the national execution capability of recipient countries, but they must not take over execution responsibilities from Governments. Furthermore, in order to smooth the transition to national execution, the programmes and funds concerned should assist in training cadres for the recipient country, particularly in financial management. Since national capabilities and circumstances differed, a nuanced approach should be adopted in pursuing the goal of national execution.

In his own country, the programme approach called for in General Assembly resolution 44/211 had created problems, some of which had even interfered with the normal project approval process. He cautioned the relevant organizations against arbitrarily combining projects into so-called programmes to qualify for review and approval, before the real meaning of the programme approach was fully understood. That practice, if left unchecked, would interfere with the smooth implementation of the current country programming cycle.

Mr. PAULINICH (Peru) endorsed the spirit of the Nordic United Nations project, adding that, as was clear from the summary by the President of the Council at the conclusion of the high-level segment, international cooperation for development was broader in scope than solely cooperation with respect to operational activities. His delegation therefore believed that the consensus reflected in General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235 should serve as the point of departure for the reform of operational activities. Furthermore, the fundamental principles of universality, neutrality, flexibility and non-conditionality must be retained.

His delegation saw merit in the Nordic countries' proposals for a coordinated and integrated approach within operational activities and for a

(Mr. Paulinich, Peru)

clear delimitation of functions between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the executing agencies. However, it could not endorse the proposal to eliminate the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. Furthermore, in considering the proposal to establish smaller executive bodies, delegations should, when striving for technical efficiency, bear fully in mind that the United Nations was essentially a political body and that the representation of Member States was an important factor. It was also essential to respect the fundamental principle of equitable geographical distribution.

With regard to the financial system, his delegation was not convinced that resources would increase or become more predictable if mandatory contributions were required. Lastly, he expressed the hope that his views would be taken into account by the Group of 77 at its forthcoming consultations in September.

Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) said that the new accent placed on coordination should help increase the potential for multilateral technical cooperation and, in general, enhance the effectiveness of the entire system of operational activities. The reform of the system of technical assistance was closely connected with the general remodelling of the United Nations and his delegation believed that the parameters for decisions concerning operational activities should be determined by the political decisions of the General Assembly.

Attention should be given to the positive experience of organizational reforms carried out by a number of agencies, primarily UNDP, at the country and regional level, as well as to the proposals submitted by the Nordic countries and the analytical report contained in document E/1992/64. The proposed International Development Council could play an important role and that the task of its establishment should be performed by the Economic and Social Council.

There should be close coordination between the activities of the various subdivisions of the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication. His delegation had therefore been encouraged by the increased interaction between the various agencies concerned with operational activities, on the one hand,

(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

and the Bretton Woods institutions, on the other. The universal nature of operational activities should also be further developed. Institutional decisions adopted by UNDP and UNICEF on the Commonwealth of Independent States and Central and Eastern Europe could help with the incorporation of the problems of transition economies into the Organization's operational activities, without diminishing the attention given to developing countries as the primary recipients of technical assistance.

While adequate and stable funding for operational activities must be ensured, such contributions must always be voluntary. Consideration should therefore be given to such proposals as joint financing with the full participation of donors and recipients and the formation of supplementary voluntary and special funds. At the level of strategy, efforts must be made to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations response to recipient countries' needs and to harmonize the programming cycles of all the funding agencies with national planning timetables. It was also essential to accelerate the transition from the project to the programme approach, to develop the integrated approach without limiting the scope for initiative at the field level and to explore means of strengthening the resident representative system. At the same time, the dimensions of human development and environmental sustainability must also be incorporated in operational activities.

Relations between Russia and UNDP had entered a qualitatively new era. Technical and advisory assistance was being rendered to the economic reforms in his country and it was important to promote the participation of Russian organizations in the UNDP programmes and projects. With reference to UNICEF, he noted a range of important measures adopted in Russia in the area of mother and child care and the implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. The invaluable work performed by UNICEF should be enhanced by developing its forecasting capacities and emergency functions. The proposals by UNICEF on reforming the system of operational activities therefore merited close attention, particularly those concerning the enhancement of inter-agency coordination and the determination of needs and priorities.

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(Mr. Kudryavtsev, Russian Federation)

With reference to the reservations expressed by Finland regarding the mandate of the newly created Department of Economic and Social Development, he said that the Department's combination of operational and analytical functions was one of its positive features and that, in time, it would prove highly effective. Operational and analytical functions had been successfully combined in the former United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and the new Department had already shown positive signs in the performance of its tasks.

Mr. KITATANI (United Nations Population Fund) said that in responding to the needs of the developing world, the United Nations system must strive to implement internationally agreed concepts and strategies to promote social justice, safeguard the environment, foster better health and education and meet other basic human development requirements. The United Nations system must be streamlined and strengthened in the pursuit of those goals and must operate as a coherent whole. Enhanced coordination in operational activities must include reforms in governance and financing as well.

Such coordination should involve all the organizations of the United Nations system at all levels. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) had proved to be extremely useful in encouraging dialogue on common policy issues and taking initiatives to enhance coordination both at Headquarters and in the field. Harmonizing the programming cycles of operational organizations with the planning cycles of Governments was an important aspect of the work of JCGP and that process was expanding in many developing countries. The Group had a comparative advantage in seeking to expand the social dimensions of structural adjustment programmes and had cooperated in important initiatives connected with streamlining policies on common services and premises in the field, training, the role of women in development, and joint programming in Africa. Further efforts were needed to promote harmonization and coordination within JCGP itself and strengthen the resident coordinator system at the country level in order to ensure the success of the Group's country-level initiatives. JCGP was committed to pursuing its work in strengthening coordination at all levels.

(Mr. Kitatani)

UNFPA continued to give high priority to coordination in operational activities with organizations outside the JCGP structure and, in particular, had been active in the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions and supported its role in coordinating operational activities throughout the United Nations system.

Further action was needed at the legislative level to ensure coordination among all organizations involved in operational activities. In that regard, he welcomed the Nordic proposal to set up an international development council. In order to carry out their operations effectively, the various agencies and organizations of the system should have their own governing bodies, maintaining their separate identities. In reporting to the international development council, those bodies would focus on implementing their specific mandates. Cohesive work by all organizations at the country level was essential in order to ensure the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities. The proposed commission on sustainable development should play an important role in helping to ensure better coordination of the normative, substantive and operational activities of the entire system.

He welcomed the Nordic proposal for a three-tier financing system for operational activities in view of the need for more secure funding in order to ensure stable programming and reduce the time and effort devoted to fund-raising activities. Far greater emphasis should be placed on the social and human development sectors, including population activities. Lastly, he looked forward to a full discussion of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly since UNFPA had participated actively in the preparations for the review.

Mr. CZARKOWSKI (Poland) said that the central problems facing the international community - poverty, economic stagnation, unemployment, ecological and social degradation, AIDS - remained unchanged. The challenge was to find the optimal policy for each development situation and to build capacity at the country level; while some progress had been made in that regard since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/211, there was a need for further adjustment of policies and procedures so as to make United Nations technical cooperation more effective.

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(Mr. Czarkowski, Poland)

Poland had a number of comments to make from the point of view of a country making the transition to a market economy.

First, reform should take into account the changing roles of all partners in development, given the relative lack of growth in the world economy, which had forced Governments to cut budgets and to make institutional and staff changes. As a result, there was a great need for training programmes.

Second, there was a related need to ensure the coherence of systems and support material among partners in technical cooperation; UNDP should, through its field offices, make the relevant documentation available to recipient institutions and agencies.

Third, recipient countries often made sizeable contributions in cash and in kind to local UNDP programmes, but such contributions were not always fully recognized; that should be corrected.

Fourth, all partners needed to do continuous evaluation of technical cooperation activities; if development programmes were to succeed, evaluation methods must be improved so that the net assistance reaching the end user could be gauged.

Fifth, governance reform should not cause the loss of certain useful features of Governing Council practice: Council members' visits to recipient countries; participation of resident representatives in formal and informal Council meetings; and the holding, during such meetings, of public seminars.

Sixth, the reform of United Nations operational activities for development should include an assessment of such things as the programme approach, national execution, successor arrangements for agency support costs, decentralization, and multidisciplinary team technical advice. UNDP should help design a system for such assessment in conjunction with the specialized agencies and financial institutions.

Seventh, human development reports would become a more useful tool for development partners if greater reliance were placed on locally provided and processed data.

Eighth, the success of multilateral cooperation would depend on the partners' ability to design concrete undertakings and ensure their sustainability. UNDP experience and the potential of its networks of offices should be fully exploited.

The PRESIDENT noted that a consensus was beginning to emerge on certain points. Thus, to eliminate duplication between the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, there appeared to be growing support for the idea of abolishing the Council's Economic and Social Committees.

The Nordic countries' proposal for broadening the funding base of United Nations operational activities and the idea of a unified structure at the country level remained somewhat more controversial.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that the key issue with respect to national execution was the need for a major effort at capacity-building. It would be interesting to hear what the various agencies had to say about the barriers to full implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 in respect of national execution in general and capacity-building in particular.

Mr. EDGREN (United Nations Development Programme) said that experiments in national execution took time and should not be hastily judged. Some bilateral donors had tried to go too fast and their projects had, in practice, ended up being run by the field offices. He thought that genuine national execution might take 5 to 10 years to be achieved. The United Nations system was trying to change things, but was impeded by inertia, by local rules and regulations, and by the sheer magnitude of training and adaptation needed, which caused Governments to see no financial advantage in national execution. In some cases a hybrid scheme was being used whereby Governments had ownership and responsibility but invited agencies to do the actual implementation. Where local administrations were weak, so much outside expertise was needed that national execution became a thinly disguised agency execution.

Such obstacles were to be expected when completely changing a modus operandi, and were being worked on by the funds and agencies. There was slow but accelerating progress, and he expected good results by the end of 1992.

Mr. CHASE (World Food Programme) said that his programme's activities were, in 90 countries, entirely the responsibility of the Governments concerned; title to the foodstuffs supplied passed to the Government at the port of entry, and the Government bore the incidental costs

(Mr. Chase)

of food-related development activities. Sometimes, however, financial or institutional weaknesses prevented Governments from taking full responsibility, and in such cases the World Food Programme would assist them in undertaking such activities.

In the least developed countries, storage and transport costs might be underwritten, as well as wages, and WFP would if necessary pay to bring in computers and other equipment and would help design monitoring systems.

Finally, he noted that more than half of the WFP training budget was devoted to local staff and that results had been encouraging.

Mr. BAHR (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that national execution presupposed national empowerment which, in turn, implied a certain national capacity; much was being done to foster such capacity. UNESCO had collaborated with UNDP in more than 10 countries on so-called "upstream" work - policy analysis and formulation - trying to build national capacity and so work towards national execution. That approach was perhaps not the best since upstream work involved change whereas national Governments tended to seek little or no change. However, Governments still looked to the agencies of the United Nations system to act as a catalyst or even to take over nominal execution of projects while involving national bodies. That approach seemed more likely to ensure progress towards the goal of national execution.

Mr. ALTESMAN (United Nations Children's Fund) said that his organization had a different perspective, since it was neither a funding nor an executing agency. UNICEF favoured a programme approach wherein goals were tightly defined, with strong accountability for use of funds, but assistance was very flexibly moulded. Its programmes were 100 per cent nationally executed.

Mr. ABYANKHAR (International Fund for Agricultural Development), responding to the question raised by the United Kingdom, said that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) worked on a project basis within the context of a national strategy for poverty alleviation. IFAD projects were 100 per cent nationally executed and, as they were fairly large, involving US\$ 8-10 million and a similar amount in co-financing, it was

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(Mr. Abyankhar, IFAD)

possible when developing them to envisage the type of capacity-building measures that would be required.

With reference to the need for sustainability, he pointed out that IFAD endeavoured to ensure that its projects were not only self-sustaining but also generated resources, adding to the material and institutional resources of the Government: it was possible, therefore, for projects to be fully nationally executed and to leave behind a stronger capacity for future execution and replication.

Mr. EDGREN (United Nations Development Programme) said that, while the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) programmes offered numerous opportunities for national execution, some ad hoc units at the country level had been forced to revert to agency execution. He therefore stressed the need for careful preliminary studies on the available capacities for national execution adding that, in certain cases, it might be necessary to adopt an intermediate stage of joint national and agency execution.

National execution in technical assistance was quite different from that in World Bank or IFAD projects. FAO was involved with technical assistance administered in combination with World Bank loans, to a total of approximately US\$ 25 million per year, all of which was agency-executed, while the project itself was executed by the Government. Finally, he noted the great importance of capacity-building, which should be stepped up with new UNDP funding, thereby further promoting the future possibilities of national execution.

The PRESIDENT said that in certain countries, including his own, departments were sometimes reluctant to assume United Nations projects since, given the lack of consultancy services, national execution was tantamount to government execution. UNDP projects involved a number of departments and sometimes resulted in 60 or more small, relatively low-budget projects offering little financial incentive and entailing burdensome reporting procedures.

Consequently, Governments were ambivalent: some departments were ardent advocates of national execution while others - such as the ministries of agriculture and public works, more familiar with the problems on the ground and manpower and budgetary constraints - were reluctant to become involved.

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Miss JANJUA (Pakistan) requested further clarification from UNICEF on the exact distinction between the project and the programme approach.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that, in view of the general agreement expressed at the Council's previous meeting on the need for further information on the programme approach, it would be useful to hear the views of other agencies on the subject, in addition to those already expressed by UNICEF and UNDP.

Mr. ALTESMAN (United Nations Children's Fund) replied that the project approach was clearly defined in terms of geographic area and types of activities providing assistance in a specific sector. The success of a project was gauged in terms of effective use of inputs and coherent management rather than its impact on a national scale.

The programme approach, on the other hand, aimed at achieving broad national goals by setting priorities with the recipient Governments; success was measured in terms of progress at the national level. That approach provided greater flexibility and ensured greater governmental and agency accountability in achieving clearly stated and monitorable goals.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.